

Peer-review report of

Ward, C., Neha, T., & Ritchie, T. (2025). Re-imagining multiculturalism: Small steps towards indigenizing acculturation science. *advances.in/psychology*, 2, e251129.
<https://doi.org/10.56296/aip00034>

Round 1

Dear Authors,

Thank you for submitting your insightful and provocative article to our special issue, "Acculturation Reimagined." We were privileged to receive comprehensive reviews from two distinguished experts in the fields of acculturation and Indigenous psychology, and we are grateful for their constructive and meticulous assessments. Prior to examining their critiques, we thoroughly studied your manuscript ourselves.

We unanimously recognize the numerous merits of your paper. The subject matter is unquestionably significant and, to a considerable degree, underexplored. Your novel approach to the convergence or divergence of multiculturalism and indigenous perspectives, coupled with your innovative methodology, is commendable. Nevertheless, both reviewers have suggested potential enhancements to your manuscript. While we will highlight some key points below, we kindly request that you address each of their observations in your revision or provide a well-reasoned rebuttal.

The first reviewer proposes restructuring the paper's content in a manner more customary for (mainstream) psychological research while acknowledging that this approach may not align seamlessly with the Indigenous epistemology employed. We believe that reorganizing the studies into distinct sections, each with its own methods, results, and preliminary discussion sections (emphasizing the interconnectedness and rationale between the studies, as noted by Reviewer 1), would amplify the paper's impact. This restructuring primarily involves the addition of headings and the rearrangement of information, which should not compromise the Indigenous approach. Therefore, please describe each study under a main heading (e.g., Study 1, Study 2) with the aforementioned subheadings. In connection with this point, it appears that the raw data from Studies 1 and 2 were identical. Would it be more appropriate to consolidate these two studies into a single study (resulting in a total of two studies)? If you maintain that the distinct analytical strategies and epistemologies justify keeping them separate, kindly make this explicit. As a general observation, in contrast to Reviewer 1, we believe that the three/two studies constitute a cohesive whole, but it would be beneficial to further emphasize the interconnectedness between them. The proposed heading structure should facilitate this objective.

The reviewers and we would appreciate more comprehensive details regarding the methods employed and the participants involved in the research. In the results section, could you attribute qualitative quotes to specific participants (using pseudonyms, presented after the quote)? Additionally, could you provide an indication of the prevalence of each theme? It would also be beneficial to directly and succinctly discuss the sentiments expressed by participants in each quote instead of simply adding it before or after a point that you describe. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to integrate the quotes more seamlessly into the text (e.g., "As one participant put it [followed by quote]"; you already do so in some places). In line 541, please include reliability estimates. Moreover, explain whether this was calculated for the first study, and if not, provide the rationale behind its omission. Lastly, please provide a reference and further information about the "salience analysis" mentioned in the manuscript.

Both reviewers and we found the historical background captivating, but they recommend condensing its length to some extent.

The reviewers also think the importance of the paper, and the lack of research on Indigenous peoples can be stressed more in the introduction considering that globally there are more Indigenous people than migrants, and their living circumstances are more dire (see [World Bank](#)), and yet have received very little attention from acculturation research.

In the three/two studies, we are wondering how the word "multiculturalism" was communicated in the interviews without it appearing as an "imposed-etic" term?

The discussion could, after delving into the context of the studies, further expand its scope to encompass the overarching issue of the absence of Indigenous perspectives in acculturation research. This presents an opportunity to establish connections with some of the literature suggested by both reviewers, thereby situating your findings within a broader academic landscape and highlighting the significance of your contribution to the field.

In addition the Reviewers' comments, we would like you to pay attention to the following points:

On p. 7 and 8, research and theorizing on how oppression can lead to self-debilitating behavior may be valuable. An influential perspective can be found here: Sidanius, J., Cotterill, S., Sheehy-Skeffington, J., Kteily, N., & Carvacho, H. (2017). Social dominance theory: Explorations in the psychology of oppression. *The Cambridge handbook of the psychology of prejudice*, 149-187.

You use a lot of footnotes that often contain essential information. Please consider integrating many of them into the main text.

In the discussion section, incorporating a table that contrasts mainstream and Indigenous conceptualizations of multiculturalism would be highly informative for readers and effectively underscore the central arguments of your paper.

Minor Linguistic Issues:

We believe there is a typo in “Bierwiazzonek & Waldrus, 2016.” The author name is Waldzus.

Given the broad audience of the journal, it would be good to define terms when first introduced. For instance, “integration” and “adaptation” have different meanings in many fields and a definition early on would help prevent misunderstandings.

There is a typo in line 77 (“then”).

There is a missing word in line 115.

l. 190, we believe “was” should be replaced with “were.”

Please revise the sentence on l. 365.

Since the authors and page number are mentioned in l. 152, they do not need to be repeated in line 154.

l. 489 presents a broad claim about the Maori population that would need a reference (cannot be supported by a small qualitative sample). Maybe rephrase that “in the current sample, participants were skeptical...”. The same applies to the following sentence.

l. 368: the full Maori word should be presented in italics (the italic format currently ends in the middle of it).

l. 757: there is an extra word which is not needed.

l. 582, could you provide context on what socio-historical context “the Islands” reflect to make sure readers less familiar with the context understand?

Citation analysis

A citation check identified several issues when it comes to the citations and reference list that need to be addressed in a revision. You can find the report [here](#).

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1e7g_5dhvZS_LdJuGza_JTQCXVtj4bjkp/view?usp=sharing

Thank you again for submitting this important piece to our special issue. We believe that the foundation of the paper is already strong, but further changes will help fully realize the potential and impact of the present work. We therefore invite you to submit a revised version within one month (i.e., by February 20).

Best regards,

Jonas R. Kunst & David L. Sam

Reviewer 1:

This paper studies perceptions of multiculturalism and acculturation choices among indigenous Māori. A central argument is that understanding of what multiculturalism means (and whether it is advantageous) cannot be generalised from immigrant populations to indigenous populations because the context of colonisation relevant to the latter means that dynamics might be different, as indeed the results of this work confirm. The work employs a 'Braided River' approach and combines inductive with deductive research, incorporating both western and indigenous approaches into the research itself. I found the paper really interesting and a pleasure to read; thank you for the opportunity to review it. However, I have several concerns that would require probably quite a major re-write/revision, possibly to the extent that the resultant paper would not fit any more with the authors' own vision/goals. I hope my comments below are helpful to the authors in developing their work.

Positives

1. The paper is presented in eloquent English and is a pleasure to read
2. The topic is clearly very important and also topical. There is a growing understanding that we must move away from studying WEIRD populations, and this paper does exactly that.
3. The work does not only make the indigenous perspective the *object* to be studied (by focussing on indigenous participants), it includes the indigenous perspective into the research approach itself by combining Western (WASP) and Māori-centric approaches.
4. I loved the fact that in the first study the results were passed back to the participants for consultation and sign-off. This is a bit of best practice that could be more broadly adapted (however, it seems that the same approach was not followed for study 3, leading to some inconsistency between studies in the approach taken).

Limitations

1. I was missing the typical headlines that are customary in Western publications (Methods, Research Design, Participants, Results). I realise the irony in me flagging this: the paper wants to go beyond the Western perspective, and I am 'complaining' that what is presented does not conform to what the Western eye would be used to. However, after all this is a Western journal. For me (a Western reader), having more of the conventional structure would have made it easier for me to digest the information. And, it is in the interest of the authors to make the information as easily digestible as possible, if they want their work to have impact.
2. Maybe because of the lack of the typical headings (see previous point), I found myself wondering about several aspects of the work. Studies 1 and 2 used focus groups... how many? How many participants in each? How were participants contacted/recruited? I was left feeling that I was more hazy on the methodology than I would have liked to be. For study 3, it is reported that 25 self-identified Māori participated, but unless I missed it this information was not provided for studies 1 and 2 (and for study 3, I would still want to know how the 25 were recruited).
3. With regards to the participants, from our own work we know that who identifies as indigenous is not always clear cut and can change depending on who participants are talking to/the perceived situational incentives. Identities are often situationally bound and flexible. Who is talking in this research, and who are they talking to (i.e., what was the identity of the research team and how might this have impacted the results)?
4. I would also have liked to be given more information on the data analysis approach (thematic analysis? Grounded theory? Analysis by iterative approach to find common themes and then identify illustrative quotes, or else?).
5. I would have liked to see more information on the methodological approach in terms of how the indigenous perspective was included. The authors state that 'WASP and Māori-centric approaches' were considered. What is a Māori-centric approach to research, and what does this concretely mean? Maybe more detail could be provided.
6. The three studies that are presented look at similar issues, yet the studies do have distinct foci. To me, it seems that this work could be presented in three separate papers, the studies did not seem to hang together that well. Splitting it up would also create room to elaborate more in some of the issues that were left quite vague (flagged in my points above).
7. The authors are right, not enough work has looked at the indigenous perspective. Having said this, some work has done this, and I found this work should have been acknowledged to reassure the reader that the work is well situated in the scientific literature. One of the most prestigious psychology review journals is the Annual Review of Psychology. Gonzalez et al.'s extensive review of 'Psychology and Indigenous People' seems a rather obvious omission. There are other recent papers

on acculturation or multiculturalism in indigenous populations that might be relevant.

8. I found the summary of the history of colonisation of New Zealand relevant and interesting, but possibly too long. Shortening it would make room for something else that could be helpful to the reader: is it possible to give the reader not familiar with the Kiwi context some information on the main cultural differences between Māori and Western culture? To give a sense of typical 'culture clash' hot-points, and give a bit of a sense of the lived experience of Māori people?

In sum, my overarching impression is that this paper does not follow the structures/conventions for scientific quantitative nor qualitative research reporting. That is, presumably, precisely the point of the paper: the work seeks to transcend Western norms. This is laudable, but might make it challenging to place the work in a Western journal. I wish the authors all the best in developing this important line of enquiry.

Reviewer 2:

Thank you for asking me to review this timely, interesting and well-written paper. The research reported therein offers a valuable contribution to advancing acculturation science (through the lens of multiculturalism) by examining Indigenous (Māori) perspectives on multiculturalism in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Such perspectives have been long-neglected and are critical to advancing intercultural theory and practice, particularly decolonial or anticolonial approaches. The paper is structured clearly, written well and technically competent. The use of the Braided River approach is innovative, although I would have liked some more information about the authors (i.e., positionality), who I assume include Māori researchers, despite the potential threat to anonymity this can create.

I have a few suggestions for revision that I think will improve the manuscript that I summarize below:

1. Language: Use of lower case for Indigenous. In the last 10 years or so the preferred practice has been to capitalize I in Indigenous out of respect for the identities and collective rights of colonized, marginalised and historically oppressed groups, e.g., 'Indigenous people', 'Indigenous perspectives'... See for example University of British Columbia's *Writing Guide for Indigenous Content* and the current APA Publication manual (chapter 5). I acknowledge that this can vary from place to place, however, so defer to the preference of the Māori researchers involved in this work (providing some detail regarding the spelling and use of the term is added, such as in a footnote).
2. Literature: There is some relevant literature that is overlooked, for example, John Berry's original work with Aboriginal people in New South Wales, Australia (1970) which was foundational to his model; also Dandy and colleagues' work in Australia; also some work from Canada (e.g., Stonefish & Kwantes). There are

parallels with these researchers' findings that could usefully be drawn upon in the Introduction and most significantly, the findings and discussion.

3. Length: the content regarding the NZ context and history is fascinating and essential (place matters!) but I wonder if it could be edited down (it is nearly 4 pages long).

4. Framework and methodology: Curious readers would benefit from more citations/supporting sources for the Braided River approach. In addition, despite the persuasiveness of the argument for this approach, I am uncomfortable about the two approaches in the first study/sample and how they are integrated. That is, what has been described as a bottom-up approach in the first part (exploring Maori perspectives on multiculturalism) and then a top-down approach in the second part (investigating Maori opposition or support for ideology, contact and policy dimensions of multiculturalism) do not sit together well for me, in part because the methods of gathering and analysing data are very different and informed by different epistemologies and frameworks – the latter utilising content analysis, with attendant concerns about cross-coder reliability and so on (very positivist) – but also perhaps because it is a big leap from Indigenous perspectives on multiculturalism to support/opposition for a specific theoretical (and WASP theoretical) framework situated firmly within a positivist or post-positivist epistemology. I am not sure what to suggest here because omission of the material on support/opposition to MC policy, contact and ideology could weaken the paper. Perhaps this may be able to be addressed with more explanation and justification in the paper's narrative.

5. Overarching research question and conclusions: Related to the above, I am not convinced that 'compatibility' of Māori and WASP perspectives on MC is what is being addressed here (or that it is important). On the one hand, you have Māori community members' perspectives on multiculturalism and on the other, WASP theories and models. To me, this is like asking if oranges are compatible with apples, because community perspectives are not the same as Elders' perspectives or Indigenous knowledge systems (which is what WASP is, a knowledge system). My second issue with it is why? Who cares? What I, and hopefully others in the field, care about is how useful are our existing WASP models for understanding multiple perspectives on living with diversity and the need to privilege Indigenous voices in furthering our understanding. The paper achieves this but the framing of it could become a more nuanced discussion about oranges, i.e., Māori perspectives (and more bottom-up). I know this is not a simple change and I have no specific concrete suggestion to make other than to suggest that 'compatible' might be the wrong word and that if re-framed and re-worded it should be re-considered throughout the paper.

6. Samples and recruitment: Some more information about the demographic characteristics of the samples and how they were recruited would be good.

7. Application: This is a more minor point – a statement is made on p.6, bottom, about the application of diversity management theories that deserves expansion/explanation: how can (or could) they reduce inequity and benefit native

[Indigenous] peoples? Some further development of this might aid in addressing point 5 above.

Round 2

Dear Authors,

Thank you for submitting your revised manuscript for our special issue. We are pleased to inform you that both reviewers now recommend the acceptance of your paper. Your thorough clarifications and revisions have transformed this work into a strong and original contribution to the literature. The paper will be suitable for publication once the following minor revisions are completed:

1. Please unblind references in the final version.
2. There are several inconsistencies in the references, primarily due to minor typos in author names but also diverging publication years. Please address the issues identified in this citation report:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lz5P077QJWY4m8OTFS43WraxXJxo8-95/view?usp=sharing>
3. Please specify whether you believe the paper is best described as a "Review" or "Perspective." We recommend the latter. This categorization affects only the journal system classification, not the paper's content.
4. Please provide the figure as a high-resolution SVG file to ensure quality in publication. Additionally, could you include an English translation of the Maori text at the midpoint of your figure (while retaining the original Maori), to ensure this vital component is widely understood? If there is no space, you could add it to the caption or figure note.
5. Please relocate the World Bank reference to immediately follow "Despite numbering 476 million and making up 6.2% of the global population," rather than at the end of the sentence, as its current placement suggests it supports the statement about a lack of acculturation research (unless it indeed does).
6. Please conduct a final proofread to address several minor inconsistencies. Some examples include:
 - a. There is full stop instead of a comma in this sentence: "...additionally, for immigrants and members of minority groups. multicultural policies are associated with lower levels of perceived discrimination"
 - b. There is an extra space at the end of this sentence: "However, amidst these positive cultural and political developments, the government was revising the national immigration policy, and without consultation with Māori as Treaty partners,

proceeded with the 1986 and 1991 changes that transformed the demography of New Zealand ." Generally speaking, there are extra spaces in several places of the manuscript, please revise.

c. There is an extra comma in this sentence: "Like Indigenous people in many parts of the world, Māori as a group are disproportionately affected by racism, poverty, unemployment, incarceration, crime, poorer health and educational disadvantage, (González et al., 2022; Houkamau et al., 2020; Kahukura, 2015; Kennedy, 2017; Kukutai & Rata, 2017; McIntosh & Workman, 2017; Simpson et al., 2015)."

d. The quotation marks are somewhat unclear in this sentence, please revise: As previously described, "Tikanga Māori requires the best of people to be at the fore all the time. At the front of that is "aroa ki te tangata manaakitanga" (love and care for people).

e. In this indented quote, there is a closing quotation mark missing: Yeah, I think our nation is still coming to terms with our own treaty let alone having another one which could supersede what we are trying to do... "I don't think that would be a good idea. I wouldn't support that whatsoever until they get it right with us.

f. Another missing closing quotation mark: All of this is necessary before we can address the question "Is multiculturalism helpful or harmful to Indigenous Peoples?

These issues are cosmetic and should require minimal time to address. We therefore request a revised version within 1 month (by May 5, 2025), but earlier submission would be appreciated. Thank you again for submitting your important work to our special issue.

Best,

Jonas R. Kunst & David L. Sam

Reviewer 1:

Thank you for the thoughtful and thorough manner in which you have engaged with reviewers' comments and revised the manuscript. Approaching the paper as more an overview of work makes sense to me and addresses my concern about the integration of approaches/methods. I appreciate this was not an easy task. I am satisfied that the manuscript addresses my previous comments - the ambiguous one related to the current authors' positionality (apologies for the ambiguity) and I see how this has been addressed. I think this is such valuable work that deserves a wide audience, and hopefully it will engage readers to 'reimagine' WASP models, theories and evidence.

Reviewer 2:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to review the revision of this manuscript. The authors have clearly taken a lot of care to engage with the previous comments in a positive way.

One of the biggest issues flagged in the previous version was the 'unconventional' way the work was reported. The authors had a choice of making the paper more conventional to fit into the straight jacket that determines how things are typically reported, or to justify the need to report things in a less conventional way. They chose the latter, and this choice seems appropriate given that the incorporation of indigenous perspectives into acculturation work might necessitate a deviation from the received conventions. I like what they have done, it makes sense to me.

One choice I am not happy with is the decision to give less, rather than more, methodological detail. The omission of exact stats and methods details is appropriate in a review paper that summarises work that has previously been through a rigorous peer review implying a quality check. When a review paper is based on work that has not through this peer review yet, the reader is asked to trust that the work is scientifically sound. I believe this is too big an ask – we've all seen papers with fundamental flaws that never saw the light of day because the authors had some blind spot for fundamental problems that were picked up by the reviewers. A high level review of something that has been scrutinised adds value, a high level review of something that might contain a lot of shifting sand potentially adds only noise at best, misleading information at worst. In short, I don't really believe in publishing high level review papers prior to the actual empirical detail having been scrutinised. The editors will need to decide how much of a problem they think this is.

This work is clearly innovative and important. I enjoyed reading about it. I think the paper is interesting and can add to the literature, but I also think there are some problems inherent to trying to do what the authors are aiming at – I don't think the authors have managed to transcend the problem. Maybe it's not possible to do so. Decisions on this paper will be a more difficult judgement call than for the average paper.